

**SYD STIRLING  
TREASURER**

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**BUDGET BOOST FOR KATHERINE REGION**

Budget 2005 backs the Katherine region, with tax cuts for local businesses and families, more local jobs, more funding for skills development and strong infrastructure spending, Treasurer Syd Stirling announced today.

“As well as record tax cuts, Budget 2005 delivers strong Territory-wide infrastructure injection, including spending on roads and schools, of \$476 million across the Territory. This will benefit local Katherine businesses and boost local jobs,” Mr Stirling said.

“Katherine residents will also benefit from the Martin Government’s continuing strong investment in skills development, with a record 10,000 Territorians to be supported in training over the next four years.

“Budget 2005 also includes funding for Katherine Hospital, as well as local roads and schools.

“There will also be more funding for our commitment to put more police on the beat and a stronger investment in community crime fighting initiatives.

“Budget 2005 is backing Katherine residents and helping to drive economic growth in the region.”

**LESS TAX FOR KATHERINE BUSINESSES, FAMILIES**

Katherine households and businesses will benefit from nearly \$40 million in tax cuts outlined in Budget 2005, making the Territory the lowest taxing jurisdiction for locally-based Territory businesses with up to 100 staff from 1 July 2006.

The cuts make the Martin Government the most tax reforming Government in the Territory history.

Budget 2005 highlights include:

- The payroll tax-free threshold will rise to \$1 million on 1 July 2005 and then to \$1.25 million on 1 July 2006. From 1 July 2004 to 1 July 2006, the payroll tax changes will mean 215 Territory businesses will no longer pay payroll tax. Territory businesses continuing to pay the tax will save on average \$31,900 a year.
- From 3 May 2005, the stamp duty threshold for first home buyers will be increased to \$200,000, almost doubling the first home owner stamp duty concession to a maximum \$6800. Around 1400 Territorians will benefit from the threshold increase. It means Territorians will save around \$2.7 million a year.
- Electronic Debit Transaction Duty and Debits Tax will be abolished from 1 July 2005, saving a local business with around 20 employees \$1430 a year.

Government has committed to a further \$40 million in tax cuts over the next five years, including cuts to stamp duty and other business taxes. Less tax for business means more jobs for Territorians.

## INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING IN KATHERINE REGION

Further spending on tourism infrastructure, roads and strategic development projects in Budget 2005 will back the local tourism and construction industries, as well as the wider Katherine community.

Highlights include:

- \$15 million for continuing upgrades to the Victoria Highway
- \$1 million for overtaking lanes between Darwin and Katherine
- \$630,000 to relocate and upgrade Pigeon Hole aerodrome
- \$740,000 to complete the upgrade of Manyallaluk Homeland Centre School
- \$710,000 for completing improvements to Gregory National Park
- \$500,000 to complete the Katherine Cultural Precinct headworks
- \$500,000 to complete upgrades to the Lajamanu to Tennant Creek via Warrego Road
- \$300,000 to complete upgrades to the Dorisvale beef road
- \$250,000 for upgrades to the Buntine Highway beef road
- \$60,000 to install solar pumps at Victoria River Research Station

## MORE FUNDS FOR JOBS AND TRAINING

Katherine residents will benefit from the Martin Government's commitment to support the training of a record 10,000 Territorians over the next four years.

New apprentices and trainees will also be able to access up to \$500 for a WorkWear WorkGear Bonus.

Katherine businesses will be able to access incentives worth \$3000 for taking on a trainee or \$7000 for taking on an apprentice in a hard-to-fill trade.

Budget 2005 delivers a range of other job and training initiatives for the Katherine region including:

- \$920,000 in Flexible Response Funding for training in remote Katherine communities
- \$580,000 for Charles Darwin University and Batchelor College tertiary courses in the region

## BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES IN THE KATHERINE REGION

To build safer communities in the Katherine region, Budget 2005 includes:

- \$9.45 million for police, fire and emergency services in the region
- \$810,000 for Katherine region community corrections
- \$320,000 to deliver court services in remote communities
- \$150,000 for volunteer bush fire brigades in the region
- \$20,000 to support the Kalano Community Patrol
- \$210,000 to continue the Community Harmony Strategy to address anti-social behaviour

## MORE HEALTH FUNDING

The Katherine region will benefit from record Health spending of \$687 million in Budget 2005, including \$20.3 million for Katherine Hospital.

Highlights for the Katherine region include:

- \$24 million for acute care services in the region
- \$16 million for non-acute health and community services
- \$600,000 for renal dialysis services
- \$20,000 to extend hours for the Sobering Up Shelter

## **BUILDING BETTER SCHOOLS IN THE KATHERINE REGION**

Budget 2005 includes a record budget for Employment, Education and Training of \$582 million.

Katherine will benefit from the investment with:

- \$13.9 million for primary and early childhood education in six Katherine schools
- \$14.65 million for primary, post primary and early childhood education in 15 remote Katherine area schools
- \$7.78 million for secondary education at Katherine High School
- \$2.67 million for isolated student education through Katherine School of the Air
- \$2.46 million for assistance to non-Government schools

There will also be more funding for works projects, including:

- \$90,000 to upgrade air conditioning at Casuarina Street Primary School
- \$200,000 for extra classroom space at Jilkminggan School

Every Government school in Katherine will also receive a share of an extra \$500,000 in funding to be provided for new school equipment.

## **OTHER INITIATIVES IN BUDGET 2005**

The Katherine region will also benefit from a range of other initiatives included in Budget 2005, including:

- an extra \$42 million over four years for secondary education
- 19 counsellors for Territory high schools above staffing formula
- an extra \$500,000 for teacher housing furniture
- \$4.4 million for VET in Schools
- increasing spending on minor new works by 40% or an extra \$8 million meaning more work for local small business and more local jobs
- indexing grants to health and community services non-government organisations to help them meet the real cost of services. This means an increase in grant payments of \$1.13 million in Budget 2005, increasing by a further \$500,000 each year ongoing

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